

VZCZCXRO7596
OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHML #0408 0360854
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 050854Z FEB 07
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5073
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 5979
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE 9529
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 2278
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 0259
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE 2469
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 3052
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON IMMEDIATE 3402
RHHMUNA/CDRUSPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 000408

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/30/2012

TAGS: [PREL](#) [ECIN](#) [XE](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY FOR INCREASED U.S. ENGAGEMENT
AT ASEAN/EAST ASIA SUMMITS

REF: A. MANILA 242

[1](#)B. MANILA 179

Classified By: Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney, reason 1.4 (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Our experience with the Philippines' hosting of the ASEAN and East Asia summits last month indicates that USG attendance at the Assistant Secretary-level in future summits is worth consideration. We cannot tell how other hosts might act, but the Philippine President and Foreign Secretary repeatedly suggested informally USG participation in the summits. We dismissed this idea since the U.S. is not a member of any of the summit groupings. But the observations of our Political Counselor on the scene indicated that the organization of the summits presented opportunities for senior level U.S. participation in bilaterals and in informal gatherings or meals, which is when much of the real discussions happened anyway (not in stilted formal sessions).

The French and Timor Leste ministers participated in this fashion. While there may not be much policy rationale for attending the group events, the wide range of bilateral possibilities could be useful, and the public diplomacy impact of senior USG attendance at ASEAN/East Asia summits could be big and reassuring, at least here in the Philippines, where there was concern at perceived lack of U.S. engagement. Such attendance could be relatively brief: a 24 hour stop for bilaterals and a dinner with foreign ministers. We have not gone back to discuss this idea with Philippine counterparts because it is OBE for the Philippine chairmanship, but it might be worth exploring informally with Singaporean counterparts in advance of the November summits there.

[1](#)2. (C) We recognize that the attendees below the leaders are almost the same as those who meet each year at the PMC/ARF, albeit fewer, and so a non-participatory U.S. presence at the ASEAN/East Asia summits would be somewhat duplicative. But the growing reality is that the ASEAN/East Asia summits are emerging as a new building block in the regional architecture for Asia, in which the U.S. does not yet have a room -- although it may have an open invitation.

[1](#)3. (C) We would welcome further thinking about whether the U.S. might helpfully expand its presence at the next round of summits to be hosted by Singapore in November 2007. The Cebu experience revealed a utility for such a role, along with a definite desire by our friends to have us there.

Visit Embassy Manila's Classified website:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eap/manila/index.cfm>

KENNEY